

Message Text

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SUBJECT: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION: PEKKA OIVIO

REF:HELSINKI 224, 74 HELSINKI 2455

1. FOLLOWING UPDATED AND CONSOLIDATE BIOGRAPHIC REPORT
SUBMITTED IN CONNECTION WITH UPCOMING TRIP TO U.S. BY
FINNISH TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (SAK) CHAIRMAN.

2. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: PEKKA OIVIO WAS BORN NOVEMBER24,
1918 IN PALKANE NOT FAR FROM TAMPERE. AFTER RECEIVING HIS
BASIC EDUCATION OIVIO WAS TRAINED AS A RAILWAY LOCOMOTIVE
DRIVER, A PROFESSION HE PRACTICED FULLTIME UNTIL 1950 WHEN
HE BECAME SECRETARY OF THE LOCOMOTIVE DRIVERS' UNION.HE
DID, HOWEVER, SERVE IN THE ARMED FORCES FROM 1940 TO 1944.
IN 1965 OIVIO BECAME CHAIRMAN OF THE LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS'
UNION AND IN 1969 HE WAS SELECTED AS LEADER OF THE FEDERA-
TION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES' UNIONS WITHIN THE SAK. IN
1972 HE BECAME THIRD CHAIRMAN (AND SECOND RANKING SOCIAL
DEMOCRATIC OFFICIAL) IN THE SAK. OIVIO SUCCEEDED NILO
HAMALAINEN AS CHAIRMAN OF SAK IN DECEMBER 1974.

3. BEFORE MOVING INTO THE TOP ECHELONS OF THE SAK
OIVIO'S FOREIGN TRAVEL WAS MOSTLY LIMITED TO OCCASIONAL
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MEETINGS OF NORDIC AND INTERNATION TRANSPORT WORKER

ORGANIZATIONS. AFTER 1972, HOWEVER, HE REPRESENTED THE SAK ABROAD INCREASINGLY FREQUENTLY. SINCE ASSUMING THE CHAIRMANSHIP OIVIO HAS VISITED MOST OF THE COUNTRIES WITH WHICH THE SAK HAS REGULAR EXCHANGES --THE NORDIC COUNTRIES, THE USSR, SEVERAL EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, YUGOSLAVIA, ITALY, WEST GERMANY, BELGIUM, ETC.

4. OIVIO HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY IN US THREE TIMES. HE SPENT A FEW DAYS IN NEW YORK LATE SUMMER 1974 AS A MEMBER OF A DELEGATION PRESENTING A PETITION FROM THE INTERNATIONAL CHILE CONFERENCE TO THE UN. SINCE THEN HE HAS TRANSITED NEW YORK TWICE RETURNING FROM ICFTU MEETING IN MEXICO CITY AND FINNISH TRADE DELEGATION TOUR TO CUBA AND PERU.

5. A QUIET UNASSUMING MAN WITH RECEDING GREYING HAIR, OIVIO IS FIVE FEET TEN INCHES TALL AND WEIGHS ABOUT 180 POUNDS. HE IS A HEAVY SMOKER BUT PROJECTS CALMNESS AND DELIVERATION. ALTHOUGH TROUBLED BRIEFLY BY AN ULCER EARLY IN HIS TRADE UNION CAREER HE WAS RECENTLY DESCRIBED AS IN GOOD HEALTH AND AS A MAN AT PEACE WITH HIMSELF. HE SURVIVED THE HEAVY PHYSICAL AND MENTAL PRESSURES OF THE RECENT NATIONWIDE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING NEGOTIATIONS (HELSINKI 210), FOR EXAMPLE, FAR BETTER THAN SOME MUCH YOUNGER COLLEAGUES. OIVIO HAS A QUIET, BUT WELL-DEVELOPED SENSE OF HUMOR. HE ENJOYS A GOOD STORY AND IS A GOOD RACONTEUR HIMSELF.

6. IN AN INTERVIEW AT THE TIME SELECTION AS SAK CHAIRMAN OIVIO DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS AN UP-FROM-THE-RANKS SOCIAL DEMOCRAT. HE EMPHASIZED THE DISTINCTION, HOWEVER, BETWEEN TRADE UNIONS AND THE PARTY SAYING THAT A SHOEMAKER SHOULD STICK TO HIS BENCH AND THAT POLITICS SHOULD BE LEFT TO THE POLITICIANS. SINCE ASSUMING THE CHAIRMANSHIP HE HAS FOLLOWED THROUGH ON THIS PLEDGE ALTHOUGH HE HAS KEPT IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH LEADERSHIP OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (SDP). HE ENJOYS A GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH SDP CHAIRMAN KALEVI SORSA.

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7. OIVIO WAS ORIGINALLY RELUCTANT TO TAKE ON SAK CHAIRMANSHIP, BUT HE NOW SEEMS COMFORTABLE IN THE JOB AND IS EXPECTED TO BE ELECTED IN HIS OWN RIGHT AT SAK CONGRESS IN JUNE 1975. FORTHCOMING VISIT TO US WILL BE THE FIRST BY AN SAK CHAIRMAN SINCE NILO HAMALAINEN VISITED IN 1970 AND MET WITH AFL-CIO PRESIDENT MEANY.

8. OIVIO DOES NOT SPEAK OR UNDERSTAND ENGLISH, BUT CAN FOLLOW A CONVERSATION IN SWEDISH. SAK INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY, KARI TAPIOLA, WILL FUNCTION AS OIVIO'S INTERPRETER DURING US TRIP. TAPIOLA IS HIGHLY SKILLED AT THIS FUNCTION AND USES SIMULTANEOUS METHOD WHICH CAN BE DISCONCERTING FOR THOSE NOT ACCUSTOMED TO IT. END UNCLASSIFIED.

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9. OIVIO'S STYLE OF LEADERSHIP DIFFERS FROM THE MORE CHARISMATIC APPROACH OF HIS PREDECESSOR. HE PREFERS TO LET OTHER TAKE THE SPOTLIGHT AND HAS BEEN CRITICIZED FOR NOT BEING A SUFFICIENTLY ARTICULATE SPOKESMAN FOR SAK VIEWS. COLLEAGUES, HOWEVER, MAINTAIN THAT OIVIO'S RETIRING MANNER BELIES HIS LONG EXPERIENCE AS A SHREWD AND CANNY NEGOTIATOR. ACCORDING TO THEM OIVIO IS VERY MUCH IN CONTROL OF SDP FACTION IN SAK AND HAS RESPECT OF ITS OTHER LEADERS. THIS PERCEPTION IS NOT SHARED BY EMBASSY' EMPLOYER SOURCES WHO DO NOT SEE OIVIO AS STRONG A FIGURE AT BARGAINING TABLE, OR IN PUBLIC, AS SUCH ADP TRADE UNIONISTS AS PAPERWORKERS CHAIRMAN AHTOLA AND METALWORKERS CHAIRMAN PENTTILA OR AS SAK'S TOP COMMUNIST, SECOND CHAIRMAN ARVO HAUTALA. SAK INSIDERS, HOWEVER, CREDIT OIVIO'S INSISTANCE ON KEEPING HAUTALA INVOLVED IN EVERY PHASE OF RECENT NEGOTIATIONS WITH LIMITING COMMUNIST'S POTENTIAL FOR MISCHIEF AND DEFTLY TAKING ADVANTAGE OF PARTICIPATION IN CURRENT GOVERNMENT EU MISSION FINNISH COMMUNIST PARTY.

10. IN EMBASSY' OPINION OIVIO HAS AN OPEN MIND ABOUT UNITED STATES AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS IN GENERAL. HE IS BASICALLY PRAGMATIC AND DOES NOT SUBSCRIBE TO THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RIGID IDEOLOGICAL APPROACH FAVORED BY MANY YOUNGER SOCIAL DEMOCRATS. IN THE DOMESTIC CONTEXT HE IS SINCERELY COMMITTED TO THE CONCEPT OF "WAGE SOLIDARITY", I.E. THE LEVELING OF INCOMES BY GIVING PROPORTIONALLY LARGER RAISES TO LOWEST INCOME GROUPS. END. LOU. AUSTAD

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